

**ANG****Bayan**

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Editorial

## The US-Arroyo regime is digging its own grave

**T**he US-Arroyo regime is hastening its own downfall in the face of the ruling system's intensifying crisis. Almost all of its moves inflame the people's raging anger and broaden the ranks of the forces determined to fight it.

The regime's grip on power weakens as calls for its ouster spread. Its desperate measures to suppress the forces opposed to it bring the regime closer to the brink of collapse.

### Worsening corruption

The recent three-day visit of the president's husband Mike Arroyo to the luxurious MGM Grand Hotel in the US is but the latest scandal to hound the regime.

Mike Arroyo squandered millions of pesos by staying in the hotel's exclusive \$20,000 a night villa reserved only for its richest clients. At an exchange rate of ₱54 to US\$1, the accommodations cost ₱1.08 mil-

lion a night, or over ₱3 million.

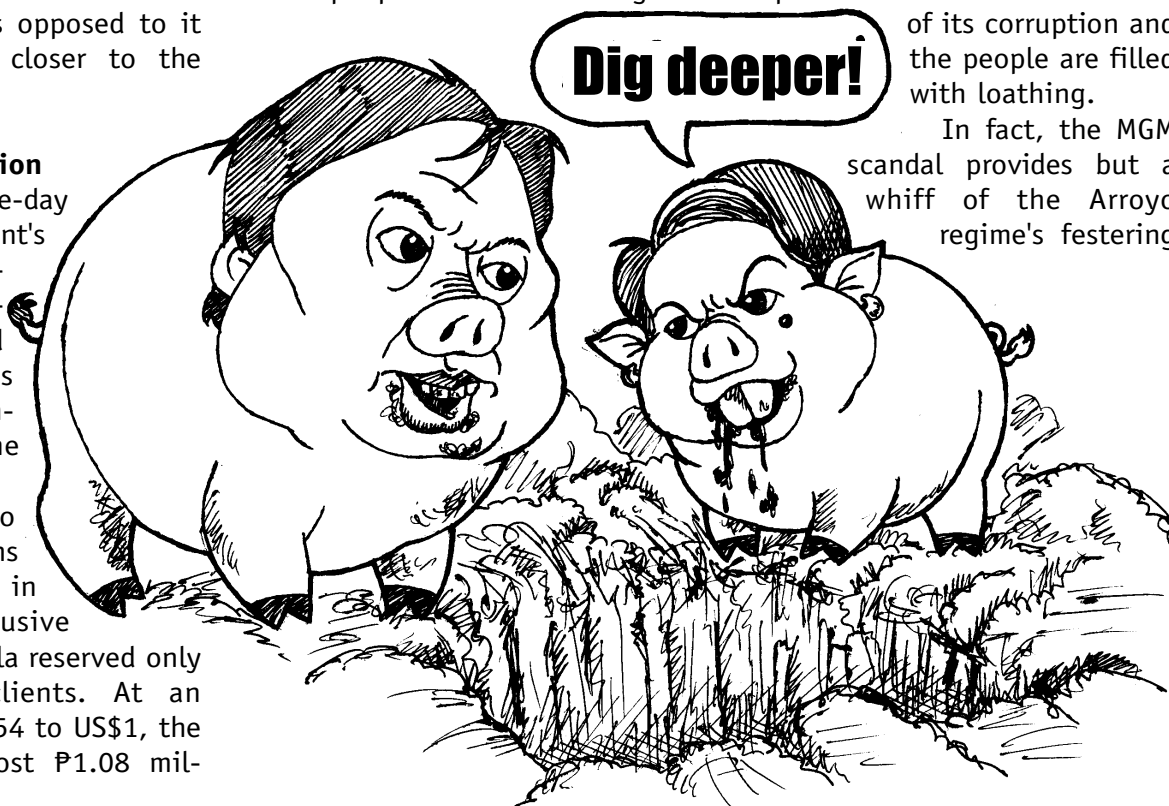
Mike Arroyo spent three million pesos for three nights while most Filipinos make do with shanties, the sidewalks or pushcarts. That's three million pesos gone in the blink of an eye even as the regime prates about the supposed need to impose ever onerous tax burdens on the people because of the gov-

ernment's near-empty coffers.

Malacañang is still hard-pressed issuing denials, distancing itself from the scandal, and making incredible claims that Mike Arroyo spent nothing for his stay at the hotel.

But no matter how much the regime wants to deodorize itself, the public retches with the stench of its corruption and the people are filled with loathing.

In fact, the MGM scandal provides but a whiff of the Arroyo regime's festering



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corruption. Aside from the percentage that the Arroyos receive from every major business project and deal, the couple also controls the largest criminal syndicates involved in smuggling rice, sugar, luxury vehicles and illegal drugs. Their partner in crime is none other than their henchman Gen. Angelo Reyes, who recently was appointed czar of an anti-smuggling task force! What better way to conceal one's own villainy?

The Arroyo couple's corruption is reflected in every branch, agency and department of the reactionary government, and above all, in the military and police. Hence, upon retirement, Arroyo's staunchest accomplices in the AFP and PNP are assigned to the most lucrative positions in the civil bureaucracy such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), positions like Executive Secretary, and of course, the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), which oversees the police. Their loyalty to the regime is guaranteed for as long as their gratification is assured.

Even discontented military and police elements rumored to be planning coups d'état are paid off by the criminal and corrupt Arroyo regime. For the latter, money can buy everything—not just the presidency of the puppet republic but the assurance of maintaining oneself in this position.

The Arroyo clique's inordinate greed inevitably exposes the breadth and intensity of its corruption. Thus, it has been slowly eliminating its own cohorts. A glaring example is the massacre of known leaders of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group in Bicutan in March.

Talk is likewise rife about plans to liquidate the plunderer Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia due to growing fears that he would expose the Arroyo couple and the regime's other ranking officials as the actual owners of multi-million dollar properties discovered abroad.

### Intensifying repression

For political forces that assiduously expose the rottenness of the ruling regime, have genuine concern for the people and fight for their welfare, Arroyo responds with a mailed fist policy. Scores of

leaders and activists of progressive organizations and parties have already been murdered, abducted, illegally arrested and harassed this year alone.

To justify intensified people's repression, the military has been Red-baiting organizations critical of, or opposed to, the Arroyo regime. The reactionary armed forces use such accusations as pretexts to attack unarmed people.


The worsening repression is a throwback to martial law in 1972 and manifests the Arroyo regime's desperate attempts to crawl out of the ever-deepening grave it is in. The promulgation of the proposed Anti-Terrorism Act which suppresses civil and political rights will aggravate the situation.

### The regime's isolation

Not even paid opinion pollsters can conceal the people's widespread anger at the Arroyo regime. The latest Pulse Asia survey in March shows the Arroyo regime's popularity plummeting to its lowest since its assumption to power in 2001. Arroyo received the lowest marks for her failure to curb spiraling prices of prime commodities and government corruption.

The Arroyo regime's overwhelming corruption and the people's intense hatred for it necessitate the expansion of the united front that would topple it.

The regime thinks that force and deception are all that is needed to suppress the emergence of such a united front. It forgets that the Marcos and Estrada regimes likewise underestimated the broad-based people's forces that toppled them from power. Arroyo also forgets that her regime is far more unstable than the fascist Marcos dictatorship. Her rotting regime has also dug itself a much deeper grave to bury itself in. **AB**

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# Broader resistance to the US-Arroyo regime's fascist crimes

**T**housands marched towards the Department of Justice in Manila on April 7 to condemn the Arroyo regime's terrorism. But in a testament to the mailed fist policy the reactionary state wishes to impose, police violently dispersed the demonstrators and illegally arrested four of the rallyists.

The attack has failed to deter the growing mass movement calling for an immediate stop to the regime's fascist attacks on democratic sectors. Prior to this, progressive parties in congress launched a hunger strike to show foreign members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) now in the country the effects of the Arroyo regime's fascist campaign. Democratic organizations are preparing bigger mass actions in the coming days.

Among those who have strongly assailed the

Arroyo regime are church people. The Catholic Church has released several pastoral letters condemning intensifying human rights violations by the police and military and has demanded the immediate resolution of the murders in Hacienda Luisita where the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) serves as mediator in negotiations between the Cojuangco family and the strikers.

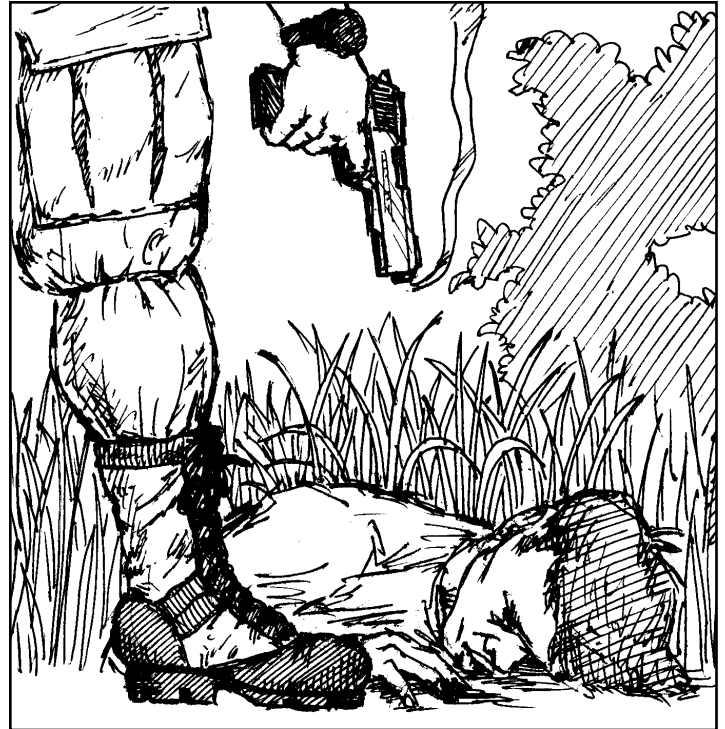
Up to 32 leaders and members of democratic organizations have been killed from January to March 17 as a result of fascist attacks by the US-Arroyo regime. Five others have been abducted and remain missing and four seriously wounded after attempts on their lives. Many have also been illegally arrested and detained and victimized by grave threats and harassment.

The latest incident was the bombing of the Bayan Muna office in Barangay Kawayan, Catarman, Northern Samar on April 6. An activist was injured when Molotov cocktails were lobbed at the office.

The attempted killing of lawyer

and Bayan Muna member Charles Juloya has also been added to the regime's long list of crimes. Juloya was on his way to San Fernando, La Union to meet other leaders of BAYAN and Bayan Muna when he was shot. He is one of the convenors of the Justice for Romy Sanchez Movement which was formed to demand an investigation and seek justice for the Bayan Muna-Ilocos region secretary general who was murdered on March 9.

Central Luzon has become the center of the renewed spate of fascist attacks, and is the setting of one of the bloodiest and most intense class struggles. On November 16, elements of the police and military massacred sugar and mill workers and supporters of the strike in Hacienda Luisita. Since then, military elements and their agents have been killing the leaders and prominent supporters of the hacienda strikers one by one. From January to mid-March, up to 12 persons have been killed or involuntarily disappeared



in the region. The Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) is using the entire region as a laboratory for the regime's policy of unleashing death squads against people's organizations and their prominent leaders.

Other victims are from Northern Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Eastern Visayas. The renewed spate of attacks follows the series of killings in 2001 when the US-Arroyo regime declared Mindoro a "national priority" of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). This year, the Arroyo regime deployed Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, dubbed the "butcher of Mindoro", to Eastern Visayas.

Progressive organizations denounced this March the document "Knowing the Enemy," an AFP briefing paper now being circulated among various military units. The paper identifies progressive organizations, institutions and even church groups as front organizations of the Communist

Party of the Philippines (CPP) and consequently as "enemies of the state." It campaigns for the outright liquidation of leaders and members of such organizations and institutions as part of the AFP's war against the CPP and the New People's Army (NPA). Now, the AFP has the gall to tell these organizations to stop their criticisms and prove their "innocence."

Aside from perpetrating such heinous crimes against the democratic movement, the ruling classes have also had the media in their crosshairs. Newspaper reporters and broadcasters who openly criticize corruption and anomalies both at the local and national levels are particular targets.

On March 24, Marlene Garcia Esperat was killed in front of her 10-year-old son in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. Esperat, a correspondent for the *Midland Review* is a known critic of corruption and nepotism among national and local officials. Prior to this, Arnulfo Villanueva, a writer for the *Asian Star Express*, was killed in Naic, Cavite on February 18. This year, four journalists have already been killed while six others have either received death threats or experienced actual attempts on their lives.

According to Reporters Without Borders, an international organization advocating press freedom, the Philippines is second only to Iraq as the world's most dangerous place for journalists. Last year, up to 14 journalists were killed while 10 others survived attempts on their lives. AB

## Heinous details of the Camp Bagong Diwa massacre

**T**he horrible details behind the Camp Bagong Diwa massacre of March 15 are slowly being revealed despite attempts to hide them from the public. It has come to light that the massacre was planned, directly ordered and led by Gen. Angelo Reyes. This confirms views that the killings were aimed at eliminating prominent leaders of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group who were known accomplices of military officials in their criminal and terrorist activities.

The details were disclosed by no less than the prisoners who survived the massacre, a number of policemen who joined the assault, and reporters cordoned off by the police.

Many of those in the area at the time recounted that the shots they heard all came from the side of the assaulting government troops. The number of prisoner-casualties far outnumbered the number of firearms recovered from the detainees. Most of those killed were innocent detainees and were not involved in the attempted jailbreak.

To justify the excessive use of force, police planted guns, including a shiny .45 cal. pistol reportedly placed over the body of Ghalib Andang alias Commander Robot, one of the victims of the massacre. Earlier reports indicated that the prisoners had seized only three pistols from prison guards.

Accounts given by survivors to organizations conducting a medical mission to attend to the wounded revealed that Special Action Force (SAF) operatives relentlessly shot at the prisoners even when they were already lying face down on the ground. The SAF elements shouted, "You Muslims

## NPA to investigate Esperat's murder

**N**ew People's Army-Far South Mindanao spokesperson Ka Efren announced that the NPA in the region will investigate the wanton killing of journalist Marlene Garcia Esperat on March 24 in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat.

In a statement dated March 29, Ka Efren named some of the big-time personalities to be investigated as Arthur Yap, former administrator and now secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA); the brothers Lino and Roncal Montilla, local government officials in Tacurong; and Supt. Willie Dagane, Gen. Santos City police chief. Esperat not only openly assailed them in her writings, she also filed cases against them.

One of the cases she filed with the ombudsman involved overpricing by the DA officials of fertilizer purchased by the government in 2003. The government officials raked in over P432 million from the deal. She also exposed the DA for pouring funds into ghost projects in Cotabato, and the collusion between a private contractor and DA officials to overprice speedboats bought by the department.

This year, Esperat likewise charged Cong. Prospero Pichay and DA undersecretary Cesar Drilon (nephew of Sen. Franklin Drilon) with smuggling P23 million worth of chicken in collaboration with DA officials. AB

are all alike!" According to the Moro-Christian People's Alliance (MCPA), over a hundred prisoners were wounded and needed medical treatment.

One survivor told his wife that the assaulting SAF elements gathered the known Abu Sayyaf leaders and lined them up before shooting them, proving that what took place was not a firefight but an extrajudicial killing.

After attacking the prisoners, SAF members repeatedly punched, kicked and cursed the survivors, paraded them naked except for their briefs and exposed them in the hot sun for almost two hours. The government troopers tortured the prisoners into admitting involvement in the attempted jailbreak, threatening them with death if they refused to do so.

The Camp Bagong Diwa massacre was directly led by Gen. Angelo Reyes, currently the secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and believed to be an accomplice of the Abu Sayyaf in a number of terrorist bombings in Mindanao and other areas. It was Reyes who handled negotiations with the prisoners and ordered the assault.

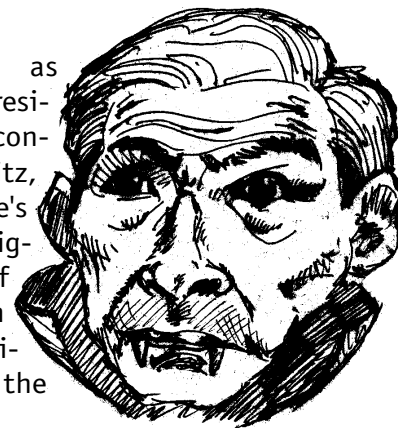
Reyes took advantage of the prisoner uprising to liquidate leaders of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group. He and other senior military, police and government officials have long been dying to silence the detained Abu Sayyaf leaders for fear that the latter would disclose the full extent of their collusion with high-ranking officials of the military, police and civilian bureaucracy and even US military agents in criminal activities such as terrorist bombings and kidnapping-for-ransom.

Different personalities and organizations have repeatedly exposed this collusion. One such exposé was made by former Abu Sayyaf hostage Gracia Burnham who revealed that it was the AFP that supplied the bandit group with guns, ammunition, medicines, rice and other food supplies.

The military kept trying to muzzle the jailed Abu Sayyaf leaders. Thus, their outrage when Ghalib Andang disclosed the collusion by a number of government and military officials with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in carrying out terrorist activities in Mindanao. Andang revealed that they staged the kidnapping of Jeffrey Schilling in 2000, saying the American was actually a CIA operative sent there to train the Abu Sayyaf. AB

## Paul Wolfowitz: A disciple of neoconservatism at the World Bank

The appointment as World Bank (WB) president of fascist neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz, one of the Bush doctrine's most rabid disciples, signals tighter US control of the institution as an instrument for the imperialist oppression of the world's peoples.



Wolfowitz is one of the leading and most prominent architects and promoters of unilateralism and the wanton imposition of US hegemony in various parts of the world. He played a key role in the US invasion and

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### Most of them are innocent

Of the over 400 prisoners in Camp Bagong Diwa, 129 are suspected Abu Sayyaf members. Seventy-three (73) of the 129 detainees are innocent and were illegally arrested in Basilan in 2001 when Pres. Gloria Arroyo declared a "state of lawlessness" in the area.

On July 26, 2001, the Commission on Human Rights released a memorandum stating that the 73 detainees were civilians and their arrest illegal. The results of a Congressional and Senate investigation also averred the illegality of their arrest. The "Basilan 73", however, are still in prison.

The military has cited ludicrous bases for arresting the "Basilan 73". In some instances, persons were arrested merely because they had nearly identical names with known Abu Sayyaf members. For example, the innocent Abdulla Yusuf was apprehended because the military claimed that he was Abdula Mulong, an alleged Abu Sayyaf element.

Since then, many more have been added to the "Basilan 73," including a number of minors. One of them lost his mind after being tortured by the military. AB

occupation of Iraq in 2003. Before his appointment to the WB, he was deputy secretary of the US Department of Defense.

Wolfowitz's assumption of the World Bank's leadership is expected to turn the institution to an even more zealous instrument of US imperialism, with its funds used to dictate policies to poor countries and make them serve US interests.

He is regarded as one of the ideologues of neoconservatism in the US. Under former President George Bush Sr., he outlined an aggressive military strategy that called for preemptive action by the US against supposedly hostile groups or states allegedly planning to attack the US. The doctrine served as the basis for the US invasion of Iraq in 1990 and 2003.

Wolfowitz was one of Bush's men who hatched up the National Security Strategy (NSS) which now serves as the framework for imposing US hegemony all over the globe. The NSS calls for no less than US economic and military domination through relentless military intervention using the defense of world peace and security as a pretext. It likewise calls for preemptive strikes against so-called rogue states and the suppression of any regional or global power that could potentially rival the US.

In accordance with this strategy is the proposed Project for a New American Century (PNAC) formulated in 1992 by neoconservatives, including Wolfowitz, and revised in 2000. To achieve the PNAC, which involves none other than US military, political and economic global hegemony, the US would launch wars of aggression and instigate war against countries opposed to US imperialism. The US has since used the 9/11 attacks as an excuse to launch military intervention and aggression in various parts of the world.

Wolfowitz was also involved in the Philippines where as Deputy Secretary for Asian Affairs, he helped US Secretary of State George Shultz convince then US Pres. Ronald Reagan to abandon Pres. Ferdinand Marcos when it became clear that US interests were being endangered by its continued support of the dictator.

Recently, Wolfowitz led the "reconstruction" of Iraq after US imperialism's aggression and occupation of the country. In addition to its crimes against the Iraqi people, the US has proved utterly inutile in providing basic services. "Reconstruction projects" awarded by the US government to the Bush family's closest friends have been wracked with corruption and cronyism. **AB**

## US intervention in Kyrgyzstan

**A** massive uprising rocked Kyrgyzstan in the last week of March, toppling the government of Askar Akayev and installing Kurmanbek Bakiyev as the country's new president.

Widespread anger over the Akayev government's corruption spurred the people's revolt. But like other uprisings in the last few years in countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union, US imperialism's hand was quite visible in Kyrgyzstan's change of regime.

US intervention in Kyrgyzstan was not unlike US meddling in Georgia's "Rose Revolution" in 2003 and Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" in 2004—two countries which were formerly part of the defunct USSR. Akayev disclosed that he was deposed by a "Third Force" composed of financiers of illegal drug syndicates based along Kyrgyzstan's border with other Central Asian countries.

It may be recalled that the term "Third Force" was also used in covert US operations to effect regime change in South Africa, Iran, Georgia and Ukraine. "Third Force" was also the name used by a group of Right-wing mercenary death squads in Latin America that killed thousands of people opposed to US puppets in the region.

Just as it did in its interventions in other parts of the world, the US exploited the Kirghiz people's anger over the Akayev government's corruption and encouraged them to replace it. The US' objective was to install a government that would be more staunchly supportive of US policies.



*Kyrgyzstan, which was part of the former Soviet Union, is found in the southern part of Central Asia. Its capital is the city of Bishkek.*

One of the more prominent players in Kyrgyzstan's regime change was Freedom House, an organization headed by former CIA director James Woolsey. It was also the major sponsor of Ukraine's "Orange Revolution". Before the change of government in Kyrgyzstan, Freedom House published 60 opposition magazines and newspapers. It also funded opposition TV and radio networks. In 2004, the US poured up to \$13.3 million into NGOs like the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, which actively participated in toppling the Akayev regime.

Kyrgyzstan's strategic position makes it extremely important for US imperialism to maintain a puppet regime in the country. The US has a military base near Kyrgyzstan's border with China from which the US launched its attacks on Afghanistan in 2001. Because of its importance to the US, Kyrgyzstan is the biggest recipient of US aid in Central Asia. The US has provided up to \$746 million in aid since 1992, and in 2004 alone poured \$31 million under the "Freedom Support Act" to fund alleged pro-democracy groups and institutions.

The country also possesses large oil reserves and is rich in minerals like gold and copper, aside from having extensive poppy plantations. Opium, which is derived from the poppy plant, is big business in Central Asia. A large part of Kyrgyzstan's population also professes Muslim fundamentalist beliefs and has for a time lent support to the Taliban and al Qaeda. Despite public censure by the US of both Islamic fundamentalists and opium traders, it has never hesitated to fund and use them covertly to advance US interests in the region.

AB

## GRP obstructs formal resumption of peace talks—NDF

THE National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) assailed the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), particularly Gloria Arroyo, for obstructing the formal resumption of peace talks with the NDFP.

In a statement dated April 2, NDFP International Information Office executive director Ruth de Leon said that the GRP violated provisions of The Hague Joint Declaration on respect for national sovereignty when it colluded with the US to include the CPP, NPA and NDFP chief consultant Comrade Jose Maria Sison in its so-called terrorist listing.

The GRP has likewise intensified its violation of the human rights of suspected revolutionaries, legal personalities and organizations and the broad masses of the people. Worse, the GRP has violated the human rights of persons authorized to participate in the peace negotiations by filing criminal cases against them and illegally detaining them. The NDFP likewise cited in particular, assassination attempts on Comrade Sison and NDFP chief legal counsel Atty. Romeo Capulong.

The NDFP also assailed the GRP for forming a sham panel that has done nothing but push for the NDFP's surrender and

## Walden Bello put to shame in Canada

the declaration of a ceasefire of indefinite duration.

PSEUDO-PROGRESSIVE Walden Bello, who poses as an anti-globalization activist, was embarrassed no end when Filipino-Canadian youth he had earlier scorned as belonging to "faceless groups allegedly representing the Filipino community" staged a rally as he tried to speak at a forum against imperialist war in Vancouver, Canada on March 19.

The youth groups exposed Bello's antipeople positions, especially his latest tirades against democratic organizations in the Philippines that he branded as "fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines" and his continuing campaign to slander the CPP, NDFP and Comrade Jose Maria Sison. They also assailed the silence of Bello and the like on the successive killings of leaders and members of democratic groups in the past three months.

The Canadian-based groups said Bello told an outright lie in claiming that he supported the peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP in answer to a question on the issue. He failed to mention that his Akbayan party has been actively pushing for the NDFP's capitulation. Akbayan has served as one of the militarist Arroyo regime's partners in its campaign